Dear Jim, 4/11/75

Before you get this you will know that I have arranged new Tennessee counsel for both criminal and civil suits if acceptable all around. I know of him only what Jim McKinley says of him and that he did get the novelist acquitted in that famous murder case in which he did commit the murder. I recall vaguely that his grandfather was governor. He seems to have the right kind of family ties for that kind of state.

It is Jim's idea that we go to see him and find out if we can all work together in harmony.

Going into this kept us from going into some areas of fact, in part because he was delayed a day getting here. Not because we drank fairly heavily, for we kept going through that until we dined together last night. (While it is the first heavy drinking I've done since the press party at Memphis I held up well and have no hang-over this a.m.) I think the drinking helped us relax. It also helped him be more forthright and as I expected after Bud's trickery he would like to pin Bud to the wall. He understands that everything I have said about Bud is off the record and that if he does it he does it on his own.

I don't know if he realizes it but he is back to the formulation I gave him in Memphis. He seems to be excited about it and I think it is still the best approach.

When he loosened up and relaxed I learned more about the Playboy situation, got confirmation of the old attitude toward me and why, and found at that their antipathy toward Guiccione and Penthouse is not because he is a business competitor. It steps from what he is, from things like our own experience.

Jeff Norman checked me out with Woodward and Bernstein. Woodward said I was either a nusiance or gave them nothing of value or both. Bernstein said I never gave them a single bad thing of tried to steer them wrong in any way, was quite helpful. I then explained some of my experiences with both of them and the paper, just for his knowledge and Norman's if it is of any interest. (Norman's decision and strongly favorable recommendation was based upon his reading of my work.) He knows the stories Woodward would not touch and their proof, enough but not all, and he knows it is all in a long draft of a book. What this does for me is confirm my suspicion of the origin of the Bennett connection and its consequences, all already written.

The guy who had been my enemy at Playboy was recently fired after being shunted out of the main office. His formula for the Ray story was from Jim to come back from the interview with a confession- Huie all over again!

Jim has done some of his own checking on the story. He has learned that Benny Edmondson is back in Missouri, has been interviewed by an AP man named Hall and says the whole Huie story about him and Ray is a fiary tale.

He also knows that Jimmy ran a little business on the side in the pen, on speed, but says the wordis that he sold it at the lowest markup. I had known this.

The probability is that what they will do at Playboy and Playboy Press on my JFK work will take some time. He can't control this and probably can't influence. I told him that my initial interest is in a commitment so we'll know where we stand and they can be in on the new stuff if they so desire. We each understand the situation of the bureaucracy, Playboy's.

To get themselves out of the mess their playing with Lane and Garrison cost them Playboy had to waste about $2,400,000! The attitude toward me is that I am too hardnosed. (They seem not to have put these two together, either!) I told him that if there is any interest in the east there they can get my Minuteman stuff from Finley, ask themselves what kind of job I did for them at their request back in early 1968 and check the files on whether or not I had done this for them and whether or not I then alleged I had been double-crossed by both Norden and the Fisher/Good combo at Playboy. I added that I think that material will still make an excellent book today and that I don't want to do it.

I'll have a rough day today because I never got to even open most of yesterday's mail and there will be today's. I'm also tired. I did open several letters with Detroit-area postmarks. The reaction to the all-night show I did is good, very good. But the weariness will be eased by the little Bushmills that remains in the bittle Jim brought and we almost emptied the first night. Best, HW